THE ONE RING™

The Rules

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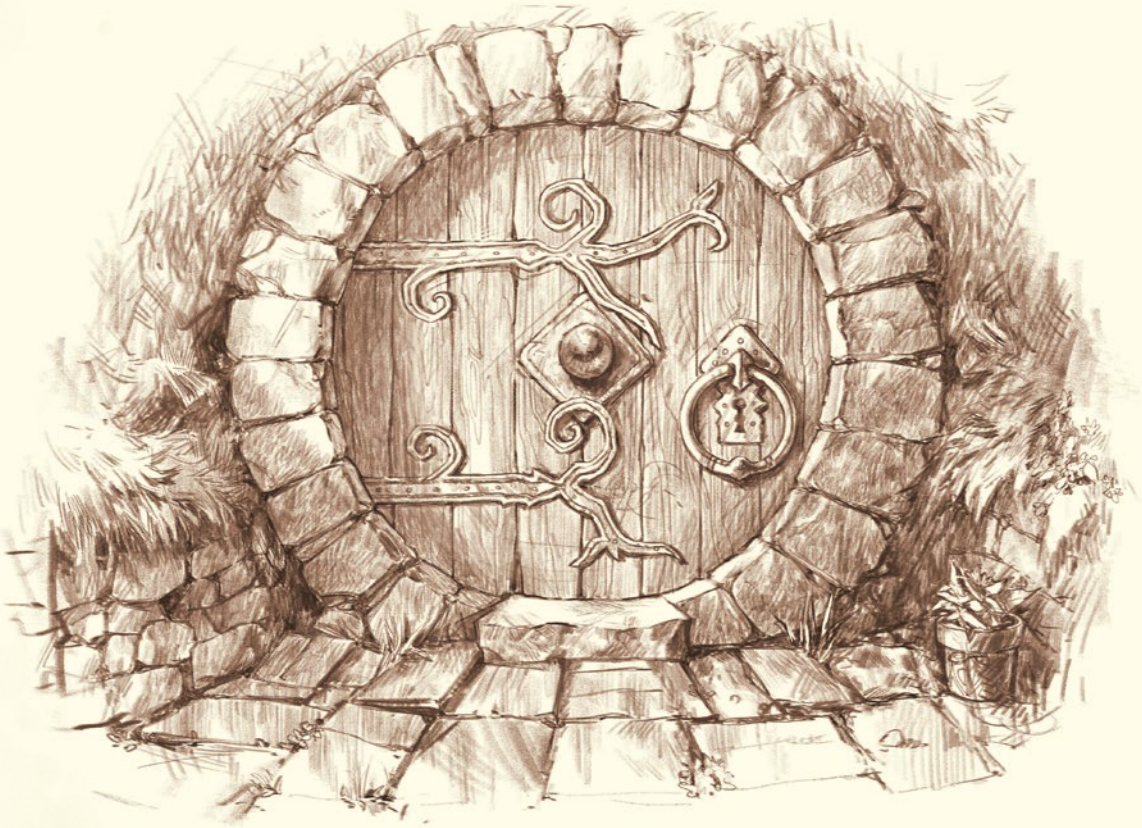


PROLOGUE

His sword, Sting, Bilbo hung over his fireplace,
and his coat of marvellous mail, the gift of the Dwarves
from the Dragon-hoard, he lent to a museum,
to the Michel Delving Mathom-house in fact.
But he kept in a drawer at Bag End the old cloak and
hood that he had worn on his travels; and the ring,
secured by a fine chain, remained in his pocket.

Deärest Bälin,

Älmost six yeärs häve pässed älreädy since the läst time you were here. I remember very well everything you änd Gändälf säid when we met. You were älärmed, änd I took your wärnings to heärt, but I don't think you would find it surprising to know thät news of ä nämeless threät is härd to believe here in the deär old Shire. Gändälf käme to see me ägäin, on severäl occäsions. He seems to cäre äbout our friendship, änd he säys I should indeed be worried, but his vägue words of wärning mäke even less of ä dent in the generäl sense of peäce änd protection thät we enjoy here, äwäy in the north-west.

But don't think thät I äm completely clueless! Äll I need is to häve ä look ät... the things I collected in my ädventures to remember thät there is ä wide änd dängerous world out there. Sometimes I even miss it, the roäd, the thrill, the närrow escäpes. It's my Tookish side. But then I look ät my beäutiful gärden, my snäpdrägons änd sunflowers, my träiling nästurtiäns... how they glow, red änd golden, more beäutiful thän äny drägon-hoärd thät ever wäs, änd I äm bäck to being ä Bäggins.

I hope whät I säy won't be too much of ä disäppointment to you. You häven't äsked yet, but I know thät you meän to invite me to join you in thät Moriä ädventure you äre älwäys tälking äbout. I äm äfräid thät I häve spent enough time cräwling in the därk under the Misty Mountäins not to wish to do thät ever ägäin! But there's ä good bunch of eäger läds änd lässes here thät you might find to your liking. Why, they äre just wäiting for no more thän ä nod in their direction from me or from our Grey friend to go off into the blue on mäd ädventures! Theirs is än äge thät is more äppropriäte to thät type of business, believe me, änd I häve täught them ä thing or two. I suspect thät Gändälf häs too...

From a letter from Bilbo Baggins, Esq. to Balin son of Fundin.

example of play

You struck some very good deals at the market today, and on your way home you decided to celebrate at The Green Dragon Inn. But now you all regret that decision, as the sun has already set in the west and dark clouds are gathering.

In fact, you are still crossing the open fields towards your home in the Green Hill Country when it starts to rain; it will take you at least another hour of restless march to get home. What's worse, since when it got dark, you heard a wolf howling. Twice, and the second time was closer.

THE LOREMASTER: *What do you do?*

PLAYER-HERO 1 (PLAYING LOBELIA): *I stop and look around for a shelter.*

THE LOREMASTER: *It's dark already, and you can't see clearly; make a* SCAN *roll.*

PLAYER-HERO 1 (LOBELIA): *I have a rating of 2 in* **SCAN**, *I want to spend a point of Hope to add 1 more.*

THE LOREMASTER: *Don't forget to roll one Feat die too.*

PLAYER-HERO 1 (LOBELIA): *Yes, of course. Right, my* **WITS** *TN is 14. Let's see; 9-1-3-5. I succeeded!*

THE LOREMASTER: *On the left you see a small, low building. If you want to reach it you'll have to leave the road.*

PLAYER-HERO 1 (LOBELIA): *Speaking in character: "Let's go there, at least we'll be dry."*

PLAYER-HERO 2 (PLAYING PALADIN): *I don't like the idea of leaving the road, and get closer to the trees, but I don't see other options. I shout back to Lobelia: "I'm with you!"*

THE LOREMASTER: *As you reach the building, you take a look at it, at the dim light of your lanterns. It's a simple stone construction with a roof covered in turf, used by shepherds. No sounds or smoke come out of it.*

PLAYER-HERO 2 (PALADIN): *I look for the door to get inside.*

THE LOREMASTER: *You find it easily, but it's closed. There is a wooden latch, tied with a rope. The knot looks tight.*

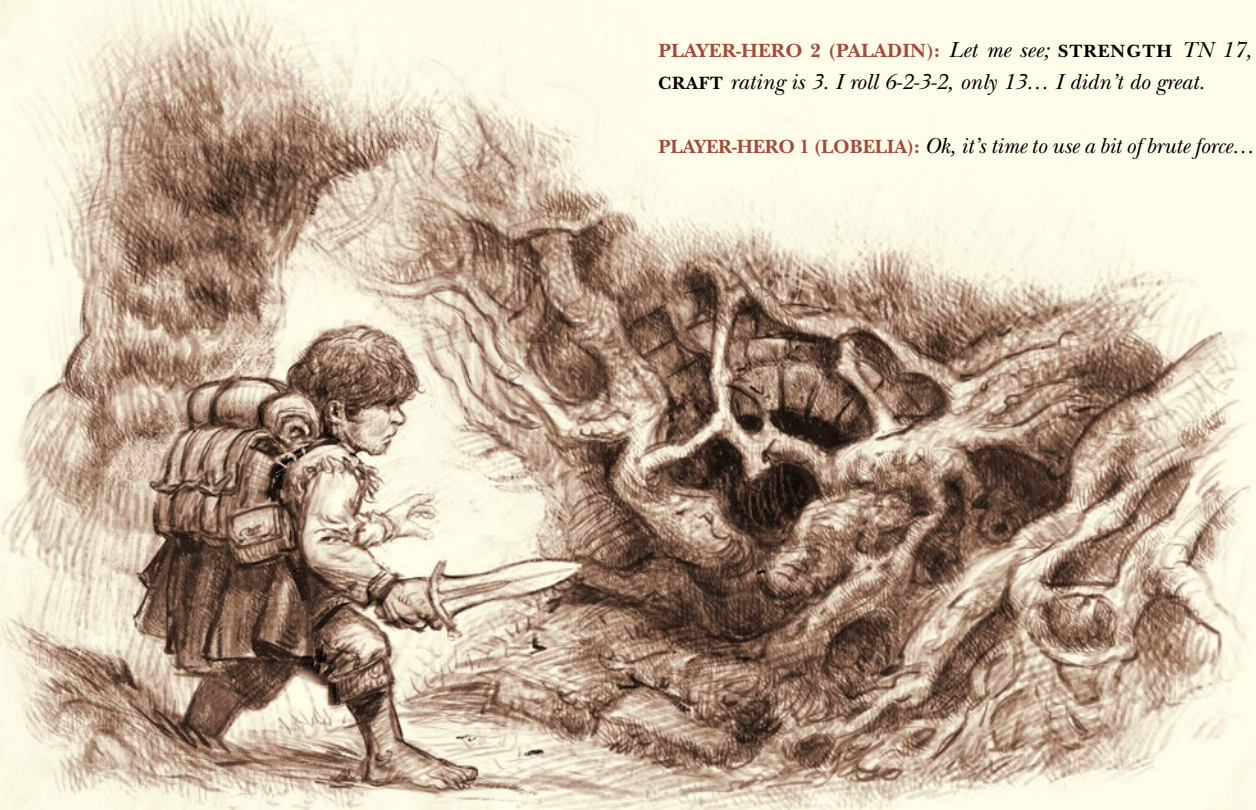
PLAYER-HERO 1 (LOBELIA): *We have no time to lose, I try to force it open.*

PLAYER-HERO 2 (PALADIN): *"What are you doing? We can't damage someone else's property!" Can I loosen the knot?*

THE LOREMASTER: *You can try, roll* **CRAFT**.

PLAYER-HERO 2 (PALADIN): *Let me see;* **STRENGTH** *TN 17,* **CRAFT** *rating is 3. I roll 6-2-3-2, only 13… I didn't do great.*

PLAYER-HERO 1 (LOBELIA): *Ok, it's time to use a bit of brute force…*



"THIS IS THE MASTER-RING, THE ONE RING TO RULE THEM ALL."

It is the year 2960 of the Third Age and the Shadow is returning. Twenty years ago, an alliance of Elves, Men, and Dwarves defeated a horde of Orcs and Wild Wolves, under a sky darkened by Giant Bats, inaugurating a new era of prosperity for the Free Peoples. But twenty years is a long time for peace to last, and in many dark corners of the Earth a shadow is lengthening once again.

Rumours of strange things happening outside the borders of civilised lands are spreading with increasing regularity, and while they are dismissed by most as fireside-tales and children's stories, they sometimes reach the ears of individuals who recognise the sinister truth they hide.

These are restless warriors, curious scholars and wanderers, always eager to seek what was lost or explore what was forgotten. Ordinary people call them adventurers, and when they prevail, they hail them as heroes. But if they fail, no one will even remember their names...

This is the premise of *The One Ring*, a roleplaying game based on *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, two extraordinary works of fiction by the beloved author and respected academic, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. With these books, Tolkien introduced readers to his greatest creation, the world of Middle-earth, a mythic land from a remote past. With *The One Ring*, Middle-earth is yours to explore – you will travel the land searching for clues about the return of the Shadow, and have the chance to play a part in the struggle against the Enemy.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE THIRD AGE

The One Ring is set in the time period running from the events narrated in *The Hobbit* to those told in *The Lord of the Rings*. Encompassing more than six decades, this period is ushered in when Bilbo the Hobbit finds the Ruling Ring, and culminates with the war fought by the Free Peoples against the Dark Lord Sauron, and the destruction of the Ring.

Players of *The One Ring* create a Company of heroes – Hobbits, Dwarves, Elves, and Men, seeking adventure in the Lone-lands of Eriador. It is a desolate country, a vast region that once saw the glory of the North Kingdom of the Dúnedain, the Men of the West. Here, many wars were fought, and countless ruins dot its landscape. Shadows move along its paths, and not all of them belong to the living.

It is in Eriador that the One Ring lies, dormant, a seed of the past that will one day bring the end of this age of the world.

THE LOREMASTER: *Can both of you please make an* **AWARENESS** *roll?*

PLAYER-HERO 1 (LOBELIA): *My* **STRENGTH** *TN is 18; Ah! I rolled an Eye of Sauron 3-4-1, didn't pass it.*

PLAYER-HERO 2 (PALADIN): *TN 17; 5-3-3-4, neither did I!*

THE LOREMASTER: *You were so busy discussing and trying to open the door that did not notice the stranger until the very last moment. It's a tall, dark and hooded figure, now raising a wicked-looking longsword!*

PLAYER-HERO 2 (PALADIN): *I draw my short sword to parry!*

THE LOREMASTER: *You were caught by surprise, you can't act this round. With a single blow, the sword cuts the rope in two. While sheathing it, the figure finally speaks with a warm, female voice: "Forgive my intrusion, my small friends, my name is Amantadine. Would you mind sharing this humble shed with me?"*

The short "unfinished tale" above is an example of what can happen during play. *The One Ring* is what is called a pen-and-paper roleplaying game. Thanks to video and online games, millions of people are familiar with this form of entertainment, where players create fictional heroes and explore shared worlds populated by computer-controlled creatures and, in online games, accessed by a multitude of other players.

In *The One Ring Starter Set*, players choose characters and meet face-to-face around a table or across the world on video, and the computer is replaced by one person taking the mantle of the Loremaster — a director, a referee, and a narrator.

The game can be played with as few as two people (one player plus the Loremaster), and with as many as six players or more. All that is needed are dice, paper, pencils, imagination, and a love for Tolkien's imaginary world.

IN THE SHIRE

This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure,
found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected.

For generations of fans, the Shire has been the gateway to Middle-earth. Both the Quest for Erebor told in *The Hobbit* and that to Mount Doom described in *The Lord of the Rings* start here, with Bilbo and Frodo providing the readers with a first-person perspective — a point of view allowing them to unravel the complexity of the world of Arda step by step. It is a small world, almost fable-like, where a single Wild Wolf poses a serious threat, and a Wizard is maybe nothing more than an eccentric fireworks-maker.

In the same way, this Starter Set describes the Shire as an introductory, less dangerous setting for new (and maybe younger) players of *The One Ring* roleplaying game:

> By using the material provided in this boxed set, the players will have a taste of the game and the world, using a simpler set of rules and adventuring within limited boundaries. Once they familiarize with the game mechanics and the scope of the game, players of the Starter Set will be ready to take on *The One Ring*, and venture across the vast expanses of Eriador and beyond.

These rules contain everything you need to quickly set up a game and play the scenarios presented in The Adventures, using the pregenerated characters contained in the box.

The Player-heroes

With the exception of the Loremaster, each player takes the role of a single Player-hero, a fictional character whose attributes are inspired by those of the protagonists of the stories by J.R.R. Tolkien.

> This Starter Set is played using a number of pregenerated characters, ready-to-play heroes setting the players on the road to adventure in no time. The available characters include esteemed Hobbits like Drogo Baggins, Paladin Took, Primula Brandybuck, Lobelia Bracegirdle, and more.

To enter Middle-earth, players must simply step into their characters' shoes, trying to think as they would think and react as they would react. It is a game of make-believe, a story in the making, created in collaboration with the Loremaster.

The Loremaster

The Loremaster doesn't take the role of a single character, but is instead the player in charge of describing the setting and managing what happens to the Player-heroes when they interact with the game world.

> The Loremaster begins each session of play by setting the scene, playing the parts of the people and creatures the characters encounter — called *Loremaster characters* or *Adversaries*, based on whether they are peaceful or hostile — and adjudicating the consequences of the heroes' actions.

The Loremaster is the eyes and ears of the Player-heroes, in charge of describing the locales where the action is taking place and playing the parts of the people they meet, using the rules to fairly adjudicate the outcome of their actions. To do so, the Loremaster interprets and reinvents Middle-earth as a setting for the players to explore. The ultimate goal of the Loremaster is to provide the premise for the creation of a new epic, focused entirely around the deeds of the Player-heroes.

ENTERING MIDDLE-EARTH...

The aim of *The One Ring* is to let players feel what it means to go adventuring in a wild and perilous land from a forgotten past. It is a threatening world that has more in common with the world depicted in epic sagas or with the Dark Ages of Europe than with our contemporary world.

Players are invited to leave the age of information and fast travel behind, and adopt the point of view of individuals whose horizons often didn't extend further than a few miles from their birthplace.

The landscape revealed by this perspective is a world with uncertain boundaries, and only vague hints of distant realms and the folks who inhabit them; a place that for these very reasons offers plenty of opportunities for exploration and adventure.

Structure of the Game

"Still, I wonder if we shall ever be put into songs or tales. We're in one, of course; but I mean: put into words, you know, told by the fireside, or read out of a great big book with red and black letters, years and years afterwards."

Story-building is a fundamental component of *The One Ring*. But it isn't about *hearing* a story being told, but about *creating it over the course of the game*, as the result of the interaction at the gaming table between the Loremaster and the Player-heroes.

Having Adventures

A session of play is played as a series of scenes, connected sequentially in a wider narrative arc. A scene is a single episode focusing on the Company, or part of it, facing some kind of challenge, preparing for one, or recovering from it.

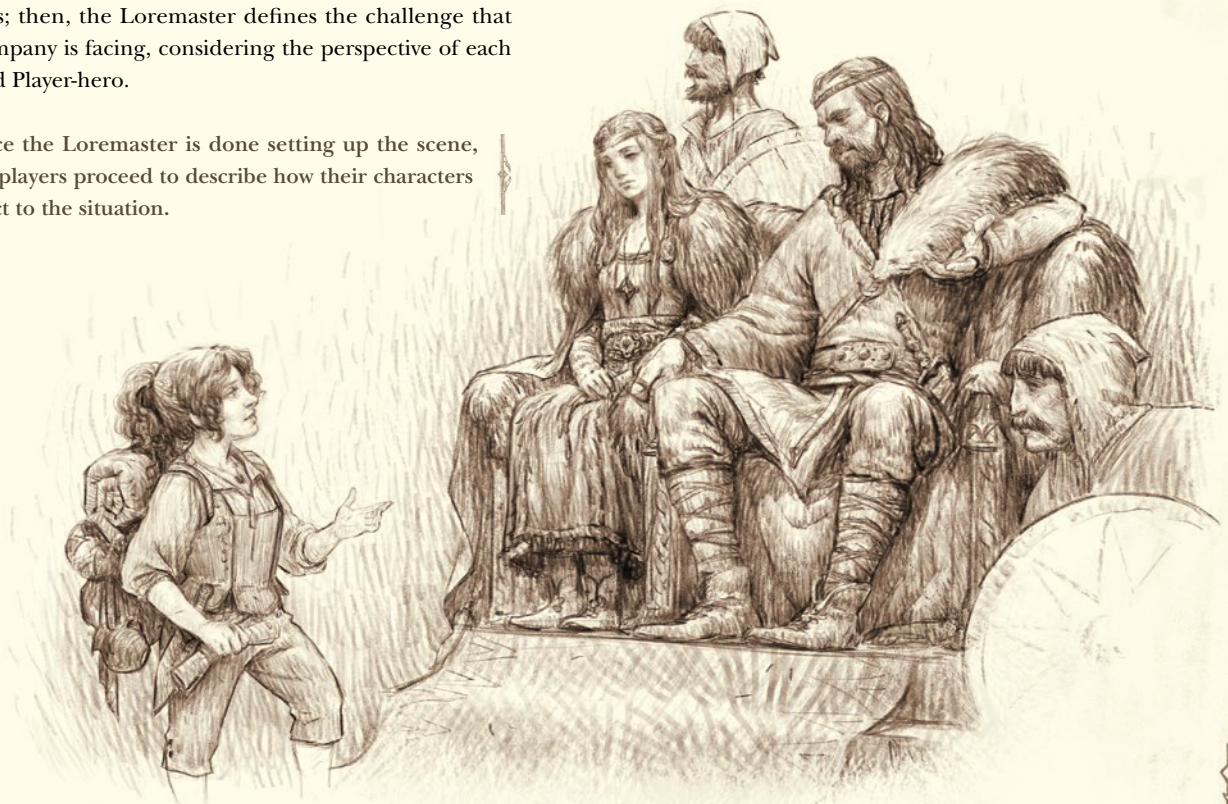
> It is up to the Loremaster to initially frame each scene, especially those that are putting the Company in danger.

To frame a scene, the Loremaster needs to first describe the location where the action is taking place, and who is there among the Player-heroes and their potential adversaries or allies; then, the Loremaster defines the challenge that the Company is facing, considering the perspective of each involved Player-hero.

> Once the Loremaster is done setting up the scene, the players proceed to describe how their characters react to the situation.

In particular, players need to choose what actions their Player-heroes take to investigate and resolve the challenge facing them. Players have full control over what their heroes do and how they do it, but it is the Loremaster that determines how every part of the world — from Loremaster characters to creatures and the environment — reacts to what the Player-heroes do.

> In general, to play out a scene and determine its consequences, the Loremaster and the players need nothing more than common sense and the rules concerning Action Resolution described on page 8. (A notable exception are those scenes that require the application of the rules for Combat described on page 22 — luckily, a rare occurrence in the Shire!)



ACTION RESOLUTION

Of the various burglarious proceedings he had heard of,
picking the trolls' pockets seemed the least difficult…

As previously explained, a game session takes the form of a continuous conversation between the Loremaster and the players. There are no turns, and the dialogue alternates between the Loremaster and the players who collaborate in bringing to life a series of scenes in which the Player-heroes are the protagonists.

> The main way for the players to participate in a scene is simply to tell the Loremaster *what* their Player-heroes are doing, and *how* they intend to do it. In game terms, this is called taking an *action*.

WHEN TO ROLL

To put it simply, the Loremaster should ask for a die roll only if there is a possibility that a player's chosen action might fail.

> If the description of an action does not leave any doubts about its outcome, there's no need to make a roll — *the action succeeds automatically*.

But this is not all there is to it: resorting to a roll should be considered exclusively if the action or its goal fall into one of the following instances:

1. **DANGER** — *Roll if the action is dangerous.*
   If the Player-hero does not risk anything by failing, do not roll.
2. **KNOWLEDGE** — *Roll if the action aims to obtain information that is not immediately available.*
   If the knowledge that the heroes are looking for is not secret or hidden, do not roll.
3. **MANIPULATION** — *Roll if the action intends to influence one or more uncooperative Loremaster characters.*
   If what the heroes ask of them is coherent with their motives, do not roll.

SCENES IN BRIEF

Scenes in game work as follows:

1. The Loremaster describes a situation requiring the players to make decisions.
2. The players investigate the situation, considering their options. Once decided, they describe their action to the Loremaster.
3. The Loremaster evaluates the plan of the players, and adjudicates whether to just 'say yes' and grant them what they want to achieve, or ask for a die roll.

More information about scenes is presented below in the Adventuring chapter, page 20.

THE ONE RING DICE

The One Ring makes use of a specialised set of dice, including six 6-sided dice (also called Success Dice) and two 12-sided dice with two special icons (called the Feat dice).

A set of *The One Ring* dice (with exactly the right amount of dice for use with the game) is included in the Starter Set, but players may find it useful to bring some more as it will be more convenient for each player to have a set close at hand.

MAKING ROLLS

Once the necessity for a die roll has been established, it must be determined *who* is going to make the roll, and *which ability* is most appropriate for the action.

WHO ROLLS

Determining who is going to make the roll is easy in the case of actions chosen by the players, but can be less so if the roll is being made as a reaction to something described by the Loremaster.

> Generally, it is highly advisable to have a single player make a roll, except when something involves everyone in the group. To do so, the players simply choose the Player-hero who is best suited to the task at hand.

WHICH ABILITY

The ability to use depends mostly on the type of roll:

- **SKILL ROLLS.** By far the most common type of actions, Skill rolls are required whenever a Player-hero attempts to do something that can be accomplished using one of the 18 Skills listed on a character sheet.

- **COMBAT ROLLS.** When involved in a fight, the Player-heroes rely mostly on their Combat Proficiencies to make attack rolls, and on **PROTECTION** rolls to avoid being injured when hit.

Finally, the Loremaster may ask the players to make **VALOUR** and **WISDOM** rolls, prompted by sources such as fear, or sorcery, as indicated in the text for The Adventures.

MAKE THE ROLL

Once determined the correct ability, proceed to make the roll employing its numerical rating (all abilities that can be used to make a roll are given a value ranging from 1 to 6):

1. Roll one Feat Die, plus a number of Success Dice equal to the rating of the appropriate ability (roll only one Feat Die if the rating is 0).
2. Add up the numerical results on all dice, comparing the total to the Target Number (TN) associated with the rolled ability.

In general terms, if the rolled total is equal to or higher than the TN, the roll is a success; otherwise, it has failed:

> A successful roll indicates that the acting Player-hero achieves their goal, while a failure means that something went wrong and that the desired goal was not achieved.

Some rules state explicitly what happens in game terms in case of a failure or a success — combat, for example, while other situations require creativity from the players and the Loremaster.

> In any case, the consequences of both a successful and a failed roll always determine a well-defined change in the gameplay.

REPEATING A ROLL

As a rule, players only have one attempt at anything that is resolved with a die roll — when they succeed or fail, they have done their best.

If the Loremaster allows it, a failed action can be attempted again by the same Player-hero if they try again using a different ability, effectively representing a different approach to the same problem.

Of course, a Player-hero who is given a second chance must always cope with the consequences of having failed the first time…

How to Read the Feat Dice

Each Feat Die shows numbers ranging from 1 to 10, and two special icons: a Gandalf rune (ᚠ) and the Eye of Sauron (👁). The two icons are normally read as follows:

- The ᚠ rune is the greatest result you can get on a Feat Die. When the die comes up showing the ᚠ rune, the action succeeds regardless of whether the total result of the roll was enough to match or beat the TN or not.
- The 👁 icon is considered to be the worst result possible on a Feat Die. When the Feat Die comes up showing the 👁 icon, the Feat Die result counts as a zero.

How to Read the Success Dice

Success Dice are special 6-sided dice, customised to show the numbers 1, 2, and 3 in outline, and the numbers 4, 5, and 6 in solid colour. In addition, a Success icon — the Elvish numeral 1 (ᛏ) — appears along with the number 6. Success Dice are always rolled together with one Feat Die.

> Add the results on all Success Dice to the result of the Feat die, with any ᛏ icons rolled indicating a superior result on a success (see Degree of Success overleaf).

Target Numbers

All abilities used in the game are associated with a Target Number, a numerical value that the roll result must match or beat.

- Most rolls made by the Player-heroes are made against three Attribute Target Numbers (Attribute TNs, for short), based on their ratings in **STRENGTH**, **HEART**, and **WITS**.
- Each Attribute TN is equal to 20 minus its corresponding Attribute score.

EXAMPLE:

Scouting ahead, Paladin Took has a chance to notice a group of brigands setting up an ambush. He has an **AWARENESS** *skill of (2), so he rolls a Feat die plus two Success dice, adding up the results of all dice rolled. As* **AWARENESS** *is a* **STRENGTH** *Skill, the roll result is compared against Paladin's* **STRENGTH** *TN, which is 13. With the Success dice showing 4 and 5, and the Feat Die an 8, Paladin's player does not need to do much maths to know that the Hobbit succeeded.*

Degree of Success

A roll result that achieves its Target Number (or resulted in the ᚠ rune) and produces one or more ᛉ icons is an outcome of a superior quality — a musician performs particularly well, a look-out spots enemies at a longer distance, an orator succeeds in galvanizing a larger audience. The greater the number of Success icons rolled, the better:

- (—) If no ᛉ icons were scored, the action was successful, but didn't achieve anything beyond the bare minimum (a *success*).
- ᛉ If a single ᛉ was scored, then the Player-hero's accomplishment was out of the ordinary (a *great success*).
- ᛉᛉ+ If two or more ᛉ icons were scored, the result was absolutely exceptional and memorable (an *extraordinary success*).

Die Roll Modifiers

Following are a number of variations upon the core rules of the game. They represent those advantages (and drawbacks!) that affect the Player-heroes as the most explicit demonstration of their ability as heroes.

FAVOURED ROLLS

A *Favoured* roll happens when a Player-hero possesses a special affinity for a task.

> When making a *Favoured* roll, players roll two Feat dice instead of one, keeping the best result among the two.

Typical sources of Favoured rolls are a Player-hero's Favoured Skills (see also Skills, page 14).

ILL-FAVOURED ROLLS

The opposite of a Favoured roll, a roll is made *Ill-favoured* when a Player-hero is suffering from some limitation.

> When making an *Ill-favoured* roll, players roll two Feat dice instead of one, keeping the worst result among the two.

The sources of Ill-favoured rolls are indicated in the included Adventures.

BONUS SUCCESS DICE

It is possible for a Player-hero to be attempting something under favourable circumstances, or employing a particularly beneficial talent. When this happens, the Player-hero may be granted a bonus in the form of a number of additional Success Dice.

FAVOURED VS ILL-FAVOURED

It is possible for a roll to be both Favoured and Ill-favoured for different, conflicting reasons – when this happens, the roll is resolved normally (roll one Feat Die only), even if multiple sources would make a roll Favoured and only one would make it Ill-favoured (or vice versa).

ILL-FAVOURED PLAYER-HEROES: At times, an ability of an adversary or another special rule may directly make a Player-hero Ill-favoured, instead of specifying a particular roll – when this happens, the unlucky adventurer is considered Ill-favoured on *all* rolls. For example, Player-heroes who have spent all their Hope points are considered to be *Ill-favoured* on all rolls.

> Bonuses are indicated in the text as *gain (1d)* or more, meaning that Player-heroes add 1 Success die to those they are entitled to roll.

HOPE BONUS: A character's Hope score is a pool of points representing the reserve of spiritual vigour that heroes draw from when confronted by difficult odds, or when a particularly good result is required by the circumstances.

> A Player-hero about to make a die roll can spend 1 Hope point to *gain (1d)*.

Hope can be spent to gain dice on any roll made by a Player-hero. It is not possible to spend multiple Hope points to gain multiple bonus Success dice.

INSPIRATION: Certain circumstances may result in a Player-hero becoming temporarily *Inspired*. Inspired Player-heroes double the benefit of spending a Hope point:

> An Inspired Player-hero who spends 1 Hope point to get a Hope bonus *gains (2d)*, instead of *(1d)*.

PENALTY SUCCESS DICE

Player-heroes wish they were lucky enough to enjoy only favourable circumstances… At times, fortune seems to conspire against them, they may put themselves in danger by their own volition looking for a greater benefit, or they may have

BONUSES VS PENALTIES

Bonuses and penalties are cumulative – if a Player-hero gains or loses dice from multiple sources, simply add up all gained dice and subtract all lost dice. For example, if a Player-hero *gains (1d)* from one source, *gains (2d)* from another and *loses (1d)* from a penalty, the affected roll *gains* a final *(2d)*.

fallen victim to some malicious power or spell. When this happens, a Player-hero may suffer from a penalty.

> Penalties are normally indicated in the text as *lose (1d)* or more, meaning that a Player-hero rolls fewer Success dice (down to a minimum of zero Success dice).

CONDITIONS

Die rolls can be modified by two special conditions that can affect the Player-heroes. Conditions are recorded on the character sheet by checking the corresponding box.

WEARY

The resistance of the Player-heroes is represented in game terms by their Endurance score. Heroes can lose Endurance in many ways, when their Endurance drops to a level equal to or lower than their Load score, they become Weary.

> When a Weary hero is making a roll, all the Success Dice that come up showing a result in an outlined number (1, 2, or 3) are considered to have given a result of zero instead.

(See page 23 for more about the effects of losing Endurance and Load).

WOUNDED

Serious injuries can cause a hero to become Wounded. While losing and recovering Endurance is an everyday occurrence, being Wounded is a more serious predicament for an adventurer and will affect them for much longer.

> Wounded heroes who remain active risk being knocked out of combat and recover lost Endurance points more slowly (see Resting, page 18).

DIE ROLL RESULTS

FEAT DIE	RESULT	SPECIAL
1–10	Read number normally	–
ᚠ	Success, regardless of TN	–
👁	Counts as a zero	–

SUCCESS DICE	RESULT	SPECIAL
1–3	Read number normally	If Weary: counts as a 0
4–5	Read number normally	–
ᛏ	Read number normally	On a successful roll, getting one or more ᛏ indicates a higher quality of success

DETAILED DIE ROLL PROCEDURE

Once the necessity of a roll has been determined, follow the steps below to do it.

1. Define what the Player-hero is trying to achieve with the roll. This is important to determine its consequences, both in the case of success and failure.
2. Select the ability to be used for the roll. Players are encouraged to suggest the appropriate ability. The difficulty for the action is based on the relevant Attribute TN.
3. Take one Feat Die and a number of Success Dice equal to the rating of the chosen ability (or two Feat Dice, if the roll is *Favoured* or *Ill-favoured*). Spend 1 Hope to *gain (1d)* — *gain (2d)* if Inspired.
4. *Gain* or *lose* dice according to any bonuses or penalties that applies to the roll.
5. Make the roll. If the roll is *Favoured*, choose the best result on the Feat Dice, or the worst if *Ill-Favoured*. If you roll a ᚠ, the action is automatically a success.
6. Otherwise, all numerical dice results are added up to get the action result. If you are Weary, all Success Dice results in outline (1, 2 and 3) are ignored. If the total action result is equal or superior to the relevant Target Number, the action is a success. If the result is lower than the Target Number, the action has failed.
7. If the action is successful, the number of ᛏ results rolled indicates the degree of success.

Characteristics

"… you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have."

All Player-heroes are defined in the game by a collection of traits and numbers, describing their physical, spiritual, and mental attributes, and the extent of their knowledge and capabilities. These values influence how they interact with the game rules.

All characters included in this Starter Set have a separate character sheet, a descriptive, double-sided form — the front of the sheet contains all the information stats and the special traits of the character, while the back contains a quick description of their background and personality.

Attributes

There are three Attributes in the game: ***STRENGTH***, ***HEART***, and ***WITS***. These scores describe a hero's fundamental physical, emotional, and mental capabilities:

- A Player-hero with a high **STRENGTH** score can be tough and fit, or quick and alert, or physically attractive or imposing. Every aspect of an adventurer that relies on vigour or physical well-being is represented in the game by **STRENGTH**.
- **HEART** measures an adventurer's capacity for emotion, empathy, and enthusiasm. A Player-hero with a high **HEART** score can be fiery, energetic, and hard to daunt. Activities that benefit from a passionate or dynamic temper may be influenced by a Player-hero's **HEART** score.
- A Player-hero with a high **WITS** rating can be clever, attentive, and ingenious. Any action that calls for an adventurer to be sharp-witted, sensible, or wise, benefits from a Player-hero's **WITS** score.

Target Numbers

The three Attribute ratings are used to determine a Player-hero's standard TNs — the default difficulty levels of all rolls made to challenge the characteristics of a hero.

- The **STRENGTH** TN is used in conjunction with all **STRENGTH** Skills, and when resolving attack rolls.
- The **HEART** TN is used in conjunction with all **HEART** Skills and when making **VALOUR** rolls, for example to resist the effects of fear.
- The **WITS** TN is used in conjunction with all **WITS** Skills and when making rolls of **WISDOM**, for example to resist the temptation of treasure.

Distinctive Features

Distinctive Features describe aspects of an adventurer's build or temper, personality traits or physical peculiarities. These features help players to picture their characters, and encourage deeper roleplaying. Players are invited to take into account their heroes' Distinctive Features throughout the game and to use them as guidelines, in particular when choosing a course of action for their adventurers.

> Additionally, players can invoke a Distinctive Feature to improve their chances to succeed at a roll using a Skill. When this happens, the Player-hero is considered to be *Inspired*.

A Distinctive Feature can be invoked on a roll only if, based on its description, it is reasonably plausible for someone with that quality to fare better than an individual without it.

Skills

Almost every action that heroes can attempt in the game is resolved using a Skill: whether a Player-hero is walking across the length of the Shire to get back home (**TRAVEL**), running away from a threat (**ATHLETICS**), or listening intently to an orator's speech to weigh their words (**INSIGHT**).

> In game terms, Skills represent what Player-heroes are able to do and how good they are at doing it. The rating of a hero in a particular Skill is indicated by the number of filled-in diamond-shaped boxes to the right of its name — the higher the number of diamonds, the better!

Skills and their use are described starting on page 14.

Favoured Skills

A number of Skills are marked as Favoured (the box to the left of their name is checked). Favoured Skills highlight those abilities that come most naturally to a Player-hero.

> All rolls made using a Favoured Skill are Favoured rolls.

Skill Categories

Each Skill belongs to one of three categories, based on which Attribute TN it's rolled against. For ease of reference, the Skills are organised on a character sheet in three columns placed right under the Attribute box they depend on.

- **STRENGTH SKILLS:** The Skills in this category rely on the Player-hero's physical aptitude. An adventurer with a high Strength score is more likely to be imposing (**AWE**), to have a clear singing voice (**SONG**), to be fit and agile (**ATHLETICS**), to have good sight and hearing (**AWARENESS**, **HUNTING**), and to possess skilful hands (**CRAFT**).
- **HEART SKILLS:** The Skills in this category depend on the Player-hero's force of spirit. An adventurer with a high Heart score may be a charismatic leader (**ENHEARTEN**, **BATTLE**), an energetic guide (**TRAVEL**), a gracious gentleman (**COURTESY**), be able to read the hearts of others (**INSIGHT**), or to understand their hurt and how to heal them (**HEALING**).
- **WITS SKILLS:** The Skills in this category depend on the Player-hero's mental aptitude. A hero with a high Wits value will quickly learn witty oratory (**PERSUADE**), the arts of a burglar (**STEALTH**), show attentiveness (**SCAN**, **EXPLORE**), and will be clever and studious (**RIDDLE**, **LORE**).

Combat Proficiencies

Combat Proficiencies express how well Player-heroes conduct themselves when engaged in battle. Rolls made using Combat Proficiencies are resolved in the same way as Skill rolls, rolling a Feat Die and a number of Success Dice equal to the rank possessed in the Combat Proficiency used — rolling only a Feat die with rank 0.

> Combat Proficiencies are rolled against the **STRENGTH** TN when making Attack rolls (see Combat, page 22).

The various Combat Proficiencies are presented starting on page 17.

Endurance, Hope and Parry

These additional stats are connected to a hero's main Attribute scores. Endurance and Hope are the fundamental resources that keep an adventurer going — Endurance points are lost while engaging in strenuous activities, Hope points are spent voluntarily by players when their Player-heroes try to overcome their limits. The Parry score sets the Target Number for all attack rolls targeting a Player-hero.

More information on how Endurance and Hope work is found on page 18. Parry is explained in the Combat chapter, starting on page 22.

Skills

"There is food in the wild," said Strider; "berry, root, and herb; and I have some skill as a hunter at need."

The 18 Skills cover wide areas of knowledge and ability, enabling players and the Loremaster to resolve most situations encountered during play.

The following list presents them in alphabetical order. A brief description is provided, to help identify the actions that can be accomplished using each Skill.

ATHLETICS

ATHLETICS is a broad Skill, covering most physical activities including; running, leaping, climbing, and swimming.

AWARENESS

The **AWARENESS** Skill represents a hero's readiness to react and the ability to notice something unexpected, out of the ordinary, or hard to detect. A high Skill score reflects both keen senses and the experience to understand what is seen or heard.

AWE

This Skill measures the capacity to evoke respect in onlookers, and determines the impression the Player-heroes make on someone they meet for the first time. It can be used to instil wonderment, admiration, or even fear. **AWE** arises from a hero's native charisma, but can also be engineered by a dramatic entrance or impressive attire.

BATTLE

A rating in this Skill shows a firm grasp of the rules of battle and the capability to maneuver appropriately when involved in a violent confrontation. The **BATTLE** Skill can be used to gain an advantage when fighting against a group of foes.

COURTESY

The Free Peoples recognise common norms of decency and ancient conventions of behaviour. Observing them demonstrates respect and is a way of quickly establishing a friendly footing even with strangers.

CRAFT

The **CRAFT** Skill doesn't really cover the whole range of abilities of smiths, wrights, and other artisans, but reflects a talent for making or mending things by hand. **CRAFT** can be used to repair the wheel of a cart, or construct an improvised raft with wood found on a river shore, or to start a fire on a windy hill.

ENHEARTEN

Player-heroes can use the **ENHEARTEN** Skill to instil positive feelings in others, urging them to act on the matter at hand. They achieve this mainly through example, charisma, and personal conviction, rather than through the effective use of words (which falls under **PERSUADE**). This Skill can be used on individuals, but is particularly effective in influencing crowds.

EXPLORE

Player-heroes rely on the **EXPLORE** Skill when they move through an unfamiliar area of the Wild. An **EXPLORE** roll may be required during a journey to find out where the Company is heading, or to get back on track after a detour; to cope with adverse natural hazards; to create paths through the wilderness or to choose a suitable place to set up camp.

HEALING

The knowledge of how to relieve pain and apply remedies to restore health to the suffering is an ancient one, and treatments differ from culture to culture. However, almost all traditions agree on the treatment of serious injuries, which must be tended immediately to keep from worsening.

The **HEALING** Skill includes bone setting and the use of herbs or salves.

HUNTING

Knowing how to hunt is a fundamental skill, shared by most cultures of Middle-earth. A **HUNTING** roll may be required when pursuing a creature through wild areas, or to follow tracks and identify a quarry by its spoor. The **HUNTING** Skill also covers preparing traps and the training and use of hunting dogs or birds.

INSIGHT

INSIGHT represents the ability to see beyond appearances and to recognise the hidden thoughts and beliefs of people. **INSIGHT** does not reveal if someone is lying, but the information it yields can be used to draw useful conclusions about people's motives.

LORE

LORE expresses a love for learning: be it a fascination with descriptions of distant lands or an interest in family genealogy. Whenever an action involves knowledge of some kind, a **LORE** test is required.

Player-heroes are considered to be knowledgeable in the traditions of their own people, and so the Loremaster should rarely require a player to make a roll for information regarding them.

PERSUADE

This Skill allows the Player-heroes to apply their reasoning to convince other individuals of an idea or course of action. It can be used to influence small groups of listeners, but only if used in an appropriate context, such as a common hall. Persuasion requires more time than other Personality Skills, but can have a more lasting impact on other characters' actions.

RIDDLE

Owing its name to the ancient game, the **RIDDLE** Skill represents the ability to draw conclusions from seemingly unconnected scraps of information by deduction, reasoning, and intuition. Adventurers also rely on **RIDDLE** whenever they are forced to talk about a subject but prefer to conceal part of what they know; for example, to tell something about themselves without revealing their identity.

As an accepted custom among many cultures, speaking in riddles is usually allowed among strangers meeting for the first time and wanting to speak guardedly. This Skill is also used to gain helpful insight from a spoken or written riddle.

SCAN

Player-heroes can use the **SCAN** Skill when examining something closely or attentively. This Skill allows a Player-hero to skim through a book to locate a piece of relevant information, look for concealed doors or hidden inscriptions, recognise a familiar face in a crowd, or locate a set of tracks on the ground. **SCAN** rolls are generally initiated by the players rather than the Loremaster. One roll is required for each inspection of a small area, such as a room. **AWARENESS**, rather than **SCAN**, is used to see if a hero passively notices something.

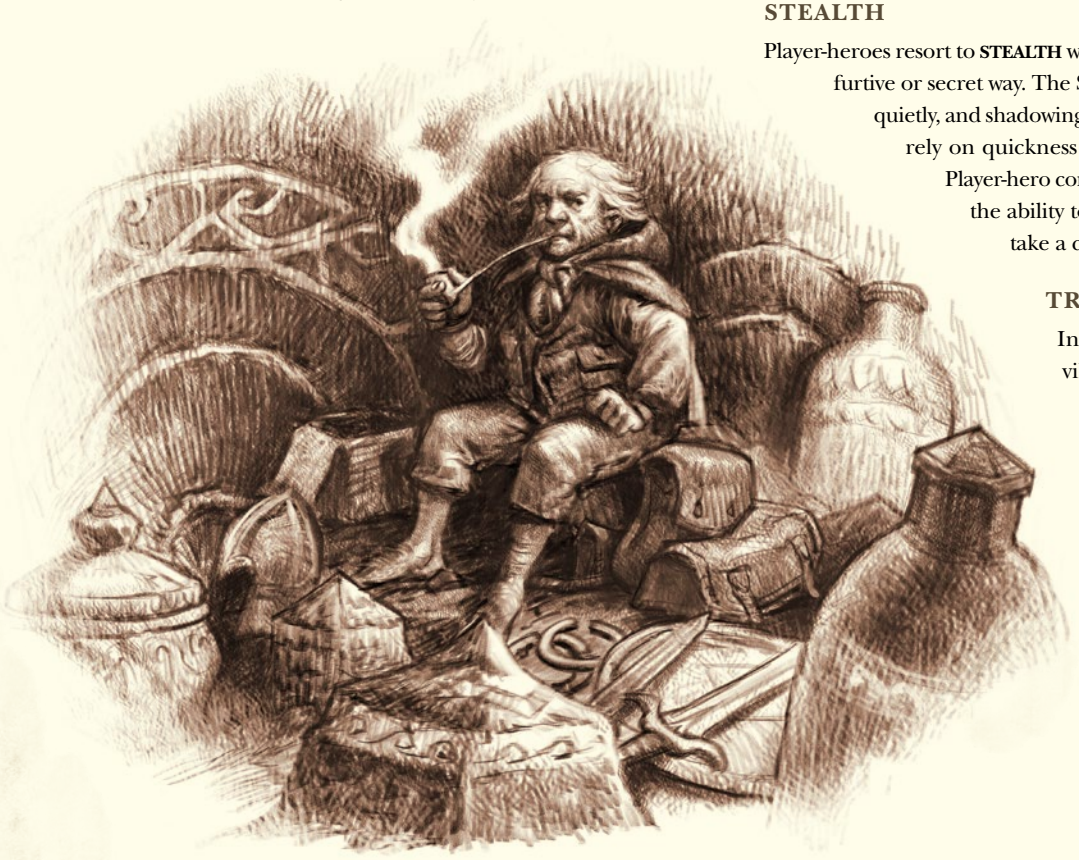
SONG

Hobbits and Men, Elves and Dwarves, even Goblins and maybe Orcs: all creatures of Middle-earth celebrate by playing music and singing songs. Great deeds and grim misfortunes are remembered in verse, and pleasant or comic stories are told to ease spirits and find comfort.

The **SONG** Skill is used to recite poems, sing songs, or play instruments suitable to a character's Culture. It can also be used to learn new works or create original compositions.

STEALTH

Player-heroes resort to **STEALTH** whenever they need to act in a furtive or secret way. The Skill includes hiding, moving quietly, and shadowing others. These activities often rely on quickness and precision, so a stealthy Player-hero combines practised caution with the ability to judge the right moment to take a chance.



TRAVEL

In the Third Age, the cities, villages, and towns of Middle-earth are often separated by many leagues of wild or deserted areas. A roll of **TRAVEL** may let a Player-hero estimate the length of a journey, read a map or evaluate whether a stranger on the road can be approached safely.

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

Legolas shot two through the throat. Gimli hewed the legs from under another that had sprung up on Balin's tomb. Boromir and Aragorn slew many.

There are four different Combat Proficiencies in *The One Ring*: ***AXES***, ***BOWS***, ***SPEARS***, and ***SWORDS***. Each one represents a level of familiarity with a number of weapons of similar kind, allowing a Player-hero to attack using any weapon covered by that specific Proficiency.

The characteristics of all war gear carried by the Pre-generated Heroes are detailed on their character sheets, or on the illustrated Item Cards included in the Starter Set.

AXES

Axes and other bashing weapons are often preferred to swords by warriors who favour a more brutal approach to fighting. Historically, the axe is the weapon of choice for most Dwarves, and for their folk it surpasses the sword in both nobility and respect. Dwarven weaponsmiths apply their cunning to making axes of many different shapes and uses, and from metals of various colours.

The **AXES** Combat Proficiency allows a Player-hero to use an *axe*, a *great axe*, a *long-hafted axe*, but also a *mattock*.

BOWS

A traditional hunting weapon, the bow is also commonly used in warfare. Made from a single piece of wood, or from a composition of wood, horn, or even metal, bows are a versatile weapon. They can be used during sieges, from horseback, in dense woodland, or in the open field. Archers usually carry another weapon to draw when the enemy gets closer; they seldom carry shields, as they can't use them when shooting a bow.

The **BOWS** Combat Proficiency enables a Player-hero to make ranged attacks using a *bow* or a *great bow*.

SPEARS

The spear is arguably the most widespread weapon across Middle-earth, arming kings and soldiers, riders and infantry. It is often no more than a long wooden shaft, tipped by a leaf-shaped metal head, but some spears are works of majestic artisanship, valuable heirlooms of noble households. The length of a spear varies according to the use it is designed for. Spears can be wielded one or two-handed to thrust and lunge, cast to pierce from a distance, or used from horseback as lances. Warriors equipped with a spear typically use it in conjunction with a shield, and they usually carry an additional weapon, such as a sword or axe.

The **SPEARS** Combat Proficiency allows a hero to make ranged and close combat attacks using a *short spear* or a *spear*, or to fight in close combat using a *great spear*.

SWORDS

The sword with a straight blade has always been the weapon of choice among free Men and Elves. A mark of nobility or rank, swords of superior make are passed down by generations of warriors, and arms of ancient lineage are often imbued with spells and curses, the bane of the servants of the Shadow. Swords vary in size, shape, and quality as diverse as the folks that craft them. Many malevolent creatures have devised swords after their own fashion, usually crude counterfeits of those made by Men and Elves.

The **SWORDS** Combat Proficiency enables a Player-hero to attack in close combat using *short swords*, *swords*, and *long swords*.

BRAWLING ATTACKS

Adventurers who must leave behind their trusted weapons may find themselves forced to fight unarmed, or to rely on a simple dagger, or even a thrown stone. When this happens, they rely on their martial training to save themselves.

- Player-heroes performing an attack while unarmed, or using an improvised weapon, roll a number of dice equal to their highest Combat Proficiency, but *lose* (1d).
- Unarmed attacks have a Damage rating of 1, and cannot cause a Piercing Blow (see Combat, page 23).

Endurance and Hope

Health and hope grew strong in them, and they were content with each good day as it came, taking pleasure in every meal, and in every word and song.

Endurance and Hope are what keep the Player-heroes on the road, providing them with reserves of energy and with that additional momentum that sometimes is the only chance a hero has to prevail.

During play, heroes lose Endurance points as the result of exertion and of suffering harm, and they spend Hope voluntarily when they must succeed against difficult odds.

The maximum Endurance and Hope values of the characters are shown on their character sheets, while the Current Endurance and Current Hope boxes are used to keep track of any changes that occur during play (alternatively, players can track them using different coloured counters, dice or glass beads).

Endurance

Endurance represents a Player-hero's resistance and is taken into account whenever an adventurer is subjected to some form of harm. In particular, Player-heroes lose Endurance during combat, when they suffer physical damage from any other source, or as a consequence of any strenuous task requiring great effort.

Player-heroes whose Endurance is reduced to zero drop unconscious, and wake up after one hour with 1 Endurance point (unless they are also Wounded, see Resting).

Weary

Used in conjunction with a hero's carried Load, Endurance determines when the weight and bulk of any equipment starts to affect a Player-hero's performance.

Heroes become Weary if their Current Endurance score becomes equal to or lower than their total Load.

When this happens, check the Weary box on the character sheet. Player-heroes remain Weary until their Endurance score rises above their Load again.

Resting

Player-heroes regain lost Endurance points by resting. The extent of the Player-heroes' recovery depends on whether they take a short rest, or a prolonged one.

SHORT REST: Under most circumstances, a day of adventuring allows for a maximum of one short rest, usually in the middle of the day. If a precise timing account is desired, a short rest may be said to correspond to at least one hour of inactivity.

With a short rest, adventurers recover a number of lost Endurance points equal to their **STRENGTH** (*Wounded* heroes do not recover any points at all).

PROLONGED REST: Under normal circumstances, the group of Player-heroes is allowed to take a single Prolonged Rest each day, (usually, a night's sleep). The Loremaster may allow the group to take more than one Prolonged Rest if the Player-heroes are recovering in a safe and comfortable place.

Player-heroes taking a prolonged rest recover all lost Endurance points (*Wounded* heroes recover a number of points equal to their **STRENGTH**).

Hope

Hope is a hero's reserve of spiritual fortitude and positivity. A hopeful character can keep going when physically stronger heroes have already succumbed to despair.

During play, players can spend Hope to gain a Hope bonus on any die roll, or to trigger the effects of certain Cultural Virtues.

Player-heroes whose Hope score is reduced to zero are spiritually drained — it is impossible for them to find the energy required to push themselves beyond their limits.

Recovering Hope

Recovering Hope points indicates that the Player-heroes are reaffirming their lost sense of confidence.

- Player-heroes who are down to zero Hope in the course of an adventure recover a single point of Hope once they take a Prolonged Rest.
- All Player-heroes recover a number of Hope points equal to their **HEART** score between adventures.

Valour and Wisdom

"There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West.
Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure."

The heroic stature of an adventurer can be measured in different ways. *The One Ring* uses two gauges to show this: **WISDOM** and **VALOUR**.

WISDOM expresses the Player-heroes' trust in their own capabilities, their self-confidence and capacity for good judgement. **VALOUR** is a measure of a hero's courage, as tempered by dangerous deeds. Individuals of valour are willing to place themselves in danger for the safety of others.

The Loremaster may require the Player-heroes ro make a roll, testing their **WISDOM** or **VALOUR**.

> When this happens, such rolls are resolved as usual, rolling one Feat Die and a number of Success Dice equal to the appropriate rating in the challenged ability — The difficulty is the **HEART** TN for rolls based on **VALOUR**, and the **WITS** TN for rolls based on **WISDOM**.

Rewards

Rewards represent the characteristics of such high-quality weapons and defensive gear, priceless instruments of war given to heroes by their own folk or family, or by generous lords honouring them by letting them choose a weapon or a suit of armour from their personal armoury.

> The Rewards earned by the Pregenerated Heroes are fully explained on their character sheet.

Virtues

Virtues are special abilities that complement a hero's arsenal of Skills and Combat Proficiencies, describing aptitudes that come naturally to an adventurer, or that arise through time and practice. Much more than simple talents, Virtues define the heroic stature of the Player-heroes.

> The Virtues practiced by the Pregenerated Heroes are fully explained on their character sheet.

Useful Items

Any tool, instrument, or device carried by a Player-hero to perform one or more specific tasks is a *useful item*. Things like a hammer, or a hunting knife, or flint and steel to start a fire, and so on.

Useful items are listed on a Player-hero's character sheet. To determine if they gain a Player-hero an advantage, they are associated with a Skill.

> If a Player-hero is making a roll outside of combat using a Skill associated with a useful item, and the Loremaster deems that this should grant the hero an advantage, the Player-hero *gains (1d)*. Only one item can benefit the same die roll.

ADVENTURING

Even the good plans of wise wizards like Gandalf and of good friends like Elrond go astray sometimes when you are off on dangerous adventures over the Edge of the Wild…

The One Ring is played as a series of sessions, comparable to the episodes of an ongoing tv show; usually, two or three sessions are played as part of a longer 'story', called an *adventure*. During each session it is the job of the Loremaster to challenge the players, putting them in difficult circumstances, setting fiendish riddles for them to solve, and confronting them with formidable opponents.

The gameplay is a dynamic narrative, as the players take action to explore the situations they encounter. The Loremaster then describes what happens as a result of their actions, and the players again react to the new circumstances, and so on.

The Loremaster keeps the story flowing through a mixture of preparation and improvisation.

THE ADVENTURES

The five, ready-to-play scenarios presented in The Adventures have been created expressly for this publication. They are potentially playable using the full rules for *The One Ring*, but they have been written specifically with the participation of the Pregenerated characters in mind. This notwithstanding, the guidelines presented in this chapter may still prove useful to a Loremaster intending to play them.

How Adventures Work

An average adventure should occupy the Loremaster and the players for about two or three sessions of play, with each session clocking in at around 3 hours of gaming.

Generally speaking, every single session tends to follow the same structure:

1. Introduction
2. Scenes
3. End of the Session

1. INTRODUCTION

If the session is the first one of an adventure, the Loremaster presents the current situation to the players. This usually sets a date or time of the year (*when*), a location (*where*), and defines an introductory situation (*what*) that includes information that allows for the involvement of the Company (*why*).

If it's not the first session of play, then the opening scene picks up from where the adventure broke off at the end of the previous session.

2. SCENES

Once a session has started, the gameplay transitions from one scene to another, with each scene describing a situation requiring the players to make meaningful decisions.

> Each scene can vary in duration from less than an hour of play time (a short but meaningful encounter), up to the entire length of the session (an important gathering taking many hours of game time to be completed). Between a number of main scenes and secondary scenes, a session of play should not last more than three or four hours.

3. END OF A SESSION

When the time allocated for the game session is up, the Loremaster and the players face two possible situations:

- If the session ends without the players reaching a satisfactory conclusion, the gameplay will resume at a later date with another session. When the playing group meets again, the Loremaster starts by summarising what happened in the previous one.
- If, on the contrary, the current narrative arc has reached its conclusion, the Loremaster draws the final curtain on the gaming session. The adventure is over. Time to plan for the next!

COMBAT

There was a ring and clatter as the Company drew their swords.

Even in a peaceful land like the Shire, combat may be the sad but unavoidable culmination of a scene. Should a fight erupt, the Loremaster and the players must follow the rules presented in this section to make the fight a momentous event.

Once a combat encounter is initiated, the following steps must be applied in order to keep the action flowing.

OPENING VOLLEYS

If the Player-heroes and their opponents are separated by a distance, at the start of a fight all combatants are allowed to make ranged attacks before combat at close quarters is initiated.

The Loremaster must determine how many volleys to allow, based on the distance separating the fighters — under most circumstances, all combatants are entitled to at least one volley using a bow or a thrown weapon. If the distance is greater, then the Loremaster might allow combatants to let loose two volleys, or even more.

All volley attacks are resolved as normal ranged attacks (see next page). Normally, the volley exchange is resolved with the Player-heroes launching their volleys first, unless the Loremaster considers the circumstances to favour the opposition.

When the opening volleys are completed, the combatants cover the distance that separates them and begin fighting at close quarters.

CLOSE QUARTERS ROUNDS

Once fighting at close quarters is initiated, the gameplay is broken down into a cycle of rounds, played one after the other until the end of the battle.

Each round follows the sequence set out below:

1. Stance: The Player-heroes choose their stances.
2. Engagement: All combatants in Close Combat are paired with one or more opponents.
3. Attack Rolls Resolution: The actions of all combatants are resolved, with those fighting in close combat going first.

STANCE CARDS

This Starter Set box includes a set of stance cards —these are meant to be used with *The One Ring* core rulebook. The full rules for fighting and travelling allow the players to choose a more specific stance during battles, and to assign a role to each Player-hero during a journey.

Players wishing to use the Stance cards can still do so, knowing that *Forward*, *Open* and *Defensive* are all Close Combat stances, and that *Rearward* is the Ranged Combat stance.

1. STANCE

All Player-heroes select whether they will fight the round in *Close Combat*, or *Ranged Combat* — Player-heroes can choose freely to fight in Close Combat at the start of each round, while they are allowed to fight in Ranged Combat only if there are at least two other adventurers fighting in Close Combat.

Fighters in Close Combat exchange blows in the thick of the fight, using swords, axes and other close combat weapons, while those engaged in Ranged Combat stay back, using ranged weapons like bows or spears, and can be targeted only by attackers using similar weapons.

2. ENGAGEMENT

At the start of each round, Player-heroes fighting in Close Combat must choose one or more opponents to engage. If all opponents are already engaged, Player-heroes without an adversary must join another Player-hero fighting an enemy.

Player-heroes fighting in Ranged Combat cannot be engaged in Close Combat, and can only be attacked by enemies using ranged weapons.

MORE ENEMIES THAN HEROES

If there are more enemies than heroes, it is possible that there will be enemies left when everyone fighting in Close Combat has engaged an adversary. If this happens, the Loremaster chooses whether the 'spare' enemies engage a Player-hero who is already fighting in a Close Combat stance, or stand back to attack with a ranged weapon. Enemies who stand back to use a ranged weapon may attack any Player-hero involved in the fight.

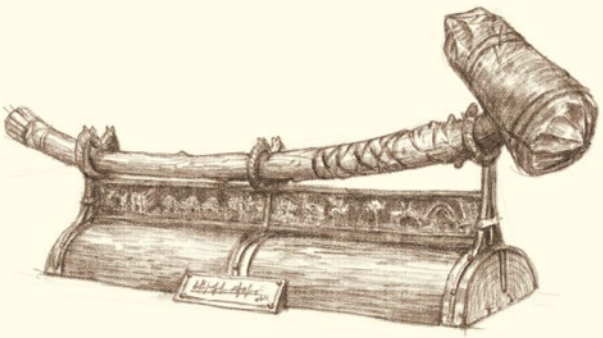
3. ATTACK ROLLS RESOLUTION

Unless differently specified, the attacks of all combatants are resolved with the Player-heroes going first. When all Player-heroes have resolved their attacks, the Loremaster will resolve those of their adversaries. Close Combat attack rolls are resolved first, then all Ranged Attack rolls follow.

An attack is a die roll made using the Combat Proficiency corresponding to the weapon used.

- The difficulty of all attack rolls by the Player-heroes is based on their **STRENGTH** TN, modified by the Parry rating of the targeted enemy.
- The difficulty of all attack rolls made by adversaries against Player-heroes are equal to the target hero's Parry score instead.

A successful attack roll inflicts damage in the form of an *Endurance Loss* based on the weapon used, and may inflict additional *Special Damage* types based on the Degree of Success of the roll. Finally, attacks may cause more long-lasting injuries if a *Piercing Blow* is scored.



ENDURANCE LOSS

When a melee or ranged attack roll succeeds, the target suffers an immediate loss of Endurance equal to the Damage rating of the weapon used.

- Player-heroes who see their Endurance decrease to match or go below their total Load score become Weary; if their Endurance is reduced to zero, they drop unconscious instead.
- Adversaries do not normally become Weary due to Endurance loss, but are normally eliminated upon reaching zero Endurance.

SPECIAL DAMAGE

If a successful attack roll produces one or more Success icons (ᚭ), they can be used to trigger one or more special results. Each heading below indicates how many Success icons are required to trigger the corresponding effect. Multiple Success icons can be used to trigger different results, or the same one multiple times.

- **HEAVY BLOW — ANY WEAPON (ᚭ):** You have hit your opponent with great force and precision — *Spend 1 Success icon to inflict to your adversary an additional loss of Endurance equal to your* **STRENGTH** *rating.*
- **FEND OFF — ANY CLOSE COMBAT WEAPON (ᚭ):** You exploit your successful attack to place yourself in an advantageous position — *Spend 1 Success icon to gain a Parry modifier of +2 against the next attack aimed at you.*
- **PIERCE — BOWS AND SPEARS (ᚭ), SWORDS (ᚭᚭ):** You have hit a less-protected part of the adversary's body — *Spend 1 Success icon to modify a Feat die numerical result of your attack by +2, thus possibly triggering a Piercing Blow (ᛟ and ᚠ results are unaffected).*

PIERCING BLOWS

In addition to causing the loss of Endurance points, any successful attack may inflict a Piercing Blow.

> An attack roll produces a Piercing Blow on a 10 or ᚠ result on the Feat Die.

Characters hit by a Piercing Blow must immediately roll one Feat Die, plus a number of Success Dice equal to the **PROTECTION** value of the armour worn (a **PROTECTION** Test).

> The Target Number for the roll is equal to the Injury rating of the weapon used by the attacker. If the roll fails, then the target of the attack has received a life-threatening blow — a Wound (see below).

WOUNDS

Most adversaries are killed outright when Wounded (unless specified differently in their description). Player-heroes, on the other hand, can resist being Wounded once without serious consequences, but risk more if injured a second time.

When Player-heroes are Wounded for the first time they check the Wounded box on their character sheet.

As seen under Endurance on page 18, Player-heroes whose Wounded box is checked recover Endurance slowly.

Player-heroes who are wounded a second time (they receive a Wound when their Wounded box was already checked) see their Endurance drop to zero, and they fall unconscious. This second Wound is not recorded on the character sheet.

Player-heroes recover from their injuries between adventures, or in a week. They are allowed to reduce the severity of their Wound with a **HEALING** roll:

A successful **HEALING** roll reduces the time required to recover by 1 day, plus 1 day for each ᛉ icon scored (to a minimum of 1 day).

Each hero may be administered a successful **HEALING** roll only once. A failed roll cannot be repeated until at least a day has passed, as the failure of the treatment isn't immediately apparent.

SERIOUS INJURIES AND DEATH

The rules about injuries as detailed in this Starter Set are meant to evoke a mood that is more appropriate to stories as those presented in The Adventures — adventuring in the Shire is meant to be exciting, maybe thrilling, but never life-threatening. Hobbit adventurers and their like are meant to return home with an exciting tale to tell to their many relations, not to be mourned after their demise.

OTHER ACTIONS THAN ATTACKS

Players may propose to do something different from an attack roll, something unusual or unexpected (this is usually a sign that they are enjoying the game, and the Loremaster should encourage it wherever possible).

The factors to consider when resolving actions other than the attack rolls are time, difficulty, and consequences.

- Can you perform the action in one round, or will it take more time? The Loremaster must decide, but for such cases consider a round to last a maximum of 30 seconds.
- Does the action require a die roll? If so, success or failure must have clear consequences. Generally, if succeeding at an action will grant an advantage to the Player-heroes, a failure should cause a disadvantage of equal importance.

TALKING WITH THE ENEMY

Often, the Company faces creatures capable of speech. Orcs and the most intelligent among Trolls speak a debased version of the Common Tongue, for example, and Dragons can outwit in conversation the smartest adventurer. This means that violence need not be the only way to survive a combat...

Some good roleplaying and clever thinking might allow the Player-heroes to find a way out of a dangerous situation, for example, tricking an excessively powerful enemy into thinking that the heroes are much stronger than they really are, or by outright deceiving them. Think of Gandalf tricking the Stone-Trolls, or Bilbo challenging Gollum at the Riddle Game, and then entertaining Smaug with a clever conversation. But a wicked Loremaster should remember that the opposite is also possible — a cunning adversary might find a way to trick the Player-heroes and lure them into a trap, or put them in a disadvantageous position using only words.